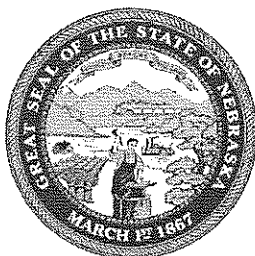


Nebraska State  
Records Board  
440 S 8<sup>th</sup> St Ste 210  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 471-2745

John A. Gale  
Chairman



## **APPLICATION FOR STATE RECORDS BOARD GRANT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION**

The Nebraska State Records Board is sponsoring a grant program for Nebraska government agencies for the development of programs and technology to improve electronic access to state government information and services. Grants will be awarded for one time funding of small projects. No grant request shall exceed \$25,000.00. The grants may be used for the creation or enhancement of electronic access and delivery of government services and information, but not to fund ongoing operations. Nebraska government agencies wishing to apply for these grants may want to first contact Nebraska.gov to establish feasibility and scope of the project.

**Applications received by April 20, 2011 will be considered for funding by the NE State Records Board at their meeting on July 20, 2011.**

**NOTE:** Loss of Funding. The NE State Records Board may be unable to award grant funds, in whole or in part, in the event funding is no longer available.

### **Grant Criteria**

Grant projects requesting funding must meet criteria #1-3.

1. Enhance the delivery of local government agency services and improve the public and business access to those services.
2. Meet the all applicable Nebraska Information Technology Commission Standards and Guidelines. State's technology access clause for providing equal access to services for persons with disabilities. A copy of the technology access clause is available at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html> under 2. Accessibility Architecture.
3. If the project or service created or improved pursuant to the grant application involves the licensing, permitting or regulation of businesses, then the project or service must allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal at: <http://www.nebraska.gov/index.phtml?section=business>, and the One-Stop Online Business Registration System at: <http://www.nebraska.gov/osbr/cgi/domestic.cgi?osbraapplication/init/init/None>.

In addition, the following criteria will be considered when reviewing applications:

- Does the project enhance the delivery of state/local government agency services and improve the public, government and business access to those services?
- Does the project reduce the amount of reliance on human capital, paper, and office overhead?
- Does the project span more than one office or agency?
- What is the size of the customer base for this service and the geographic impact?
- Is there financial and or in kind contribution from other partners?
- Is there documented community support for the project?

**Responses are required to all questions in Parts I, II & III in order to be considered for funding:**

## **Part I. Grant Summary**

- 1. Name of agency applying for grant** Nebraska Real Estate Commission
- 2. Title of project** Online License Renewal
- 3. Brief description of project:**

The Nebraska Real Estate Commission (NREC) has offered online license renewal since 2000. However the system is not very sophisticated and is not integrated with our database (online filings create an image similar to a paper filing that we print out and process as a paper filing). This grant request is to provide the funding to make necessary changes to our database to make online filing an automated process, allowing internal efficiencies and making the process more user friendly for filers.

- 4. Grant amount requested** \$ 22,011
- 5. If the grant is to create an application, is the application to have a fee associated with its use for accessing public records, or is the application free for use by the public, businesses and other governmental agencies?**

The Nebraska Real Estate Commission charges a fee for all license renewals. The online fee is the same as the fee for paper filings, \$90 a year for salespersons and \$115 a year for brokers, and would remain the same (subject to future change by the Commission, who has discretion to set the fee within a statutory range).

**If there is to be a fee, provide any statutory authorization for assessing the fee.**

Neb. Rev. Stat. 81-884.14 "After the original issuance of a license, a renewal application and an annual fee to be established by the commission of not more than two hundred fifty dollars for each broker, and not more than two hundred dollars for each salesperson, shall be due and payable on or before the last day of November of each year."

Fees within the statutory range are set by the Nebraska Real Estate Commission.

**6. If the grant application is for a Geographic Information System project, do you and the agency you represent agree to share the data collected in that project, without costs, with other interested government agencies in the State that may have a need for such data?**

Not applicable

## **Part II. Grant Detail**

**1. Please describe the project in detail, to include your vision for the project. (You may attach this description).**

The Nebraska Real Estate Commission needs to create internal efficiencies and make the online license renewal process more user friendly. The current online renewal process simply creates an image which the Commission prints out and manually processes like other paper filings. The requested grant money would be utilized for making changes to the existing database, to allow the online application to interface with the database for automated renewal processing. The online renewal application would also interface with our database and pre-populate fields based on the user's identification, making online renewals easier and more user friendly.

Database enhancements to allow for data import and export for online renewals would be performed and contract employees of the Department of Administrative Services and would be funded by the grant.

Enhancements to the online renewal application would be done by Nebraska.gov and the cost associated with such enhancements would not be paid by the grant, but would be recouped over time through a percentage fee (3% proposed, subject to approval by the Nebraska State Records Board) paid by the NREC to Nebraska.gov on each transaction, the 3% would be included in the transaction cost, not in addition to.

Once implemented, renewal notices could be sent via postcard with instructions on how to renew online, rather than mailed in a large packet, which will save both postage, printing, and paper processing time (notices are currently manually updated for continuing education between printing and mailing). This will also encourage adoption rates for online renewal.

It is envisioned that online renewals, while being automated to the greatest extent possible, will be implemented as a daily batch process, as certain aspects of renewal will still have to be manually reviewed prior to processing.

**2. Please describe who the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be.**

The online renewal function would be available to all Nebraska real estate licensees, about 7000 currently.

**3. What is the projected activity for access or use of the proposed service?**

Similar services in other states have 70-90% adoption rates. The NREC has a goal of an 80% or higher adoption rate for the use of the online renewal system.

**4. Timeline for implementation of the project (a specific completion date (MM/YYYY) must be provided). Grant funds may lapse if not expended prior to completion date.**

1. Job analysis in preparation for the grant application-----December 2010-February 2011 (not part of grant expenses, but part of project)
2. Analysis and Design----August 2011
3. Coding and Unit Testing—September 2011-August 2012
4. Implementation (Completion) September 7, 2012

**5. Please specify in detail your, or any other Subdivision(s) contribution to the project (financial, labor, equipment etc.). Provide specific dollar amounts.**

The NREC will provide labor in preparing and writing specs and business requirements for the project as well as testing, reviewing project plans, attending meetings, reviewing project e-mails, etc. It is difficult to estimate the hours needed and therefore the dollar value associated with this, such review would be done primarily by the Administrative Assistant/Information Systems Specialized Registrations/Webmaster and the Director, estimated total time needed:

Infrastructure Support Analyst	40-100 hours
Director	20-40 hours

**6. Is other funding available for this project (explain)? Please explain what efforts your agency has made to obtain funding.**

The Nebraska Real Estate Commission has not made a specific budget request to fund this project. Given the current state budget deficit and the Commission's current cash fund balance and projections, it was not deemed prudent having any likelihood of success if requested.

The Commission's Cash fund balance was depleted by 2009 Special Session Budget Cuts and yearly decreases in the number of licensees (the Commission is funded through license fees). Funding for the project would not be available even if an appropriation was granted, therefore an NSRB grant is being requested for this project.

**7. Does the project require additional statutory authority (explain)?**

No

**8. Specify (in detail) what the grant money will be used for. Include a complete cost breakdown of the project. Please attach bids from vendors (if applicable) and describe the relationship, if any, between a vendor and you or your agency.**

See Attached Spreadsheet

**9. Why the grant money is needed for the project, and, if applicable, how will the service be sustained once the grant money is expended?**

The 5% budget cuts instituted in the 2009 special session have left little to no flexibility in the Commission's budget. Based upon the Governor's and Appropriation Committee's Preliminary Budget Recommendation, the NREC will have to function at 5% less than the initially projected 2010-2011 budget for the current year (FY2010-11) and through the next two ensuing fiscal years, absorbing inflationary increases and increasing legal costs leaves no additional room for IT projects of this scope. The NREC is a smaller agency with a total budget of approximately \$1.1 million annually.

**10. Should available fund not allow the NSRB to grant the full amount requested, but a reduced amount, would this project still be financially feasible?**

The project could still be considered with a very minor decrease to the NSRB grant, while significant reductions would make the project financially unfeasible at this time.

**11. Please describe how this project will enhance the delivery of government agency services and improve the public and/or business access to those services.**

Licensees will have a pre-populated form that will be faster and more convenient to fill out than a paper application or the current online application that has limited pre-populated fields. The new online Application will also have more checks and safeguards built into the process to speed acceptance and processing of the application for the users and minimize human intervention by the NREC in processing the application. The Nebraska Real Estate Commission serves slightly over 7,000 licensed real estate salespersons and brokers are potentially served by the enhance application. The benefits to the users will come primarily through Nebraska.gov's enhancements to the online filing application, while these are not part of the grant they would not be possible without the grant work to the database.

**12. Please describe how this project will improve the efficiency of agency operations.**

With the enhanced database and online filing application the Nebraska Real Estate Commission will be able to process applications more efficiently and save postage and printing costs (when successfully implemented we will send out a postcard instead of an application packet). Staff will spend less time processing applications and will have more time to answer questions and serve our constituents. Printing and postage for the renewal packets is currently slightly over \$5,000 per year, the cost of printing and mailing a renewal notice postcard would be much less.

In addition we currently re-assign trust account examiners (3 FTE) for two to three weeks each year to help with renewal mailing and processing, as well as hiring a temporary staff for 10-12 weeks during the renewal period each year. Temporary staff budget for this purpose is approximately \$7,000, and the temporary staff should no longer be needed if adoption rates approach projections.

**13. Please describe how this project will facilitate collaboration between either local, state, federal and/or other public or private institutions.**

The system involves real estate agents and brokers. This is an example how private business must interact with State government. The purpose is to make that interaction as simple and smooth as possible.

**14. Does the project involve the licensing, permitting or regulation of business? If yes, explain how the project or service will allow integration with the State of Nebraska's Business Portal, located at:**

<http://www.nebraska.gov/index.phtml?section=business>, and the One-Stop Online Business registration system located at: <https://www.nebraska.gov/osbr/index.cgi>

Yes. The Online License Renewal system allows various licenses for the Real Estate industry to be renewed over the internet.

The renewal system will be available through the Business Portal. The renewals may be featured during the renewal season. Throughout the year, the renewal system will be listed among the business services, as well as included in all services listings.

Users will be provided a link to the One-Stop Online Business registration system within the Online Renewal System. This will take them directly to the site, should they need to access any of the resources available through this service.

**15. Community Support. Please include letters of support to document the public expression that has caused you to implement this application.**

A survey was created to gain feedback from licensees. 87% stated that they would like to receive a postcard to remind them of renewal and basic information on how to renew online, with the option of requesting a paper renewal packet if needed.

### **Part III. Technical Information**

**1. Describe the hardware, software, and communications needed for this project and explain why these choices were made.**

The Application is built using the development tool Powerbuilder 11.5.1 and the database used is SQL Anywhere 11.0

The communication is done through ODBC

The NREC Application and Database resides on Windows 2003 Server

The Development Machine is a Dell with a Pentium D CPU 2.8 GHz

We will use the same tool and database for automating the renewal process as is currently in use for the database structure and architecture.

**2. Address any technical issues with the proposed technology including:**

- **Conformity with general accepted industry standards. Projects which interface with other state systems (such as distance learning systems) must meet NITC technical standards and guidelines. (The NITC standards and guidelines are located at: <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/>).**
- **Compatibility with existing institutional and/or statewide infrastructure.**
- **Reliability, security and scalability (future needs for growth or adaptation).**

Nebraska.gov will work with the contracted employees of the Department of Administrative Service to meet all standards and guidelines.

- 3. Describe how the project will comply with the State's Technology Access Clause:** meet all applicable Nebraska Information Technology Commission Standards and Guidelines. A copy of the Standards are available at:  
<http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html>. under **2. Accessibility Architecture.**

Nebraska.gov will verify that the current guidelines and standards are met for this project.

- 4. Describe how technical support will be provided.**

Technical support for the database applications will be provided in the same way it currently is, through our assigned developer at Department of Administrative Services Information Management Services.

Users of the online system will be given contact information for Nebraska.gov, should any issues develop. Nebraska.gov is available by email or phone number. A team of developers will be available to respond to issues that may come up with the system.

#### **Part IV. STATE LAW COMPLIANCE**

Nebraska law, sections 4-108 through 4-114 state that no political subdivision of the State shall provide public benefits, to include grants or contracts, to a person not lawfully present in the United States. If this application is awarded in whole or in part, and during the time the grant is in effect, the undersigned, on behalf of the political subdivision grant applicant, by signing this grant application, affirmatively states and acknowledges that the political subdivision will comply with this law.

#### **Part V. CONTACT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE**

**Contact person, and title, for any questions regarding this application:**

Greg Lemon                      Director, NE Real Estate Commission  
Printed Name                      Title

Phone # 402-471-2004 E-mail greg.lemon@nebraska.gov

Physical Address: 1200 N st., Suite 402  
Lincoln, NE 68508



I, the Authorized Representative of NREC, certify to the Nebraska State Records Board that the applicant/agency has the necessary authority to undertake the proposed project, will comply with Affirmative Action requirements and provide a drug free workplace environment.

Signed this 23 day of March, 2011

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Director

Please return completed application to:

**Executive Director**  
**Nebraska State Records Board**  
**440 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 210**  
**Lincoln, NE 68508-2294**  
**(402) 471-2745**  
**(402) 471-2406 (fax)**

**Board Staff use only, do not fill in below this line**

Grant Request Number: <u>1</u>	Date Request Received: <u>3/25/11</u>
Grant Amt Requested: <u>\$2,000</u>	Grant Request Score: _____
Technical Comm. Recommendation: _____	
Grant Disposition: _____	Date of Mtg Minutes: _____

(Last updated 02/07/2011)

Project	Phase	Task	Estimate of time as of 01/29/2011
Renewal forms - Build new Import screen's and Import functionality to automate Renewal form information coming in as a file from online web team into the NREC Database for the following Renewal Forms "Active Broker", "Active Salesperson ", "Associate Broker ", "Branch ", "Inactive Broker " and "Inactive Salesperson Renewal"			
<b><u>Summary of Changes</u></b>			
		<b>Analysis and Design</b>	40
		<b>Coding and Unit testing</b>	220
		Active Broker Renewal Import	
		Active Salesperson Renewal Import	
		Associate Broker Renewal Import	
		Branch Renewal Import	
		Inactive Broker Renewal Import	
		Inactive Salesperson Renewal Import	
		Changes in the Ancestor code and Functionality	
		Build new Windows, Menu options and tool bars for	
		Renewal form import automation	
		Testing Text file format and number of columns imported for the Renewal forms	
		Create new SQL Anywhere Database tables	
		New window functions, SQL changes and testing	
		Importing values into current Renewal and associated tables	
		Create new datawindow and User objects	
		Testing Import Logic and functionality	
		Error checking and error messages	
		Backup older version of NREC Application	
		Deploy (Package) changes for production	
		Test Deployment (Implementation version)	
			6.00
<b>Implementation</b>			
<b>Estimate of Subtotal Total Hours</b>			<b>266.00</b>
Actual Hours			
Contingency @ 20%			
<b>Total Hours</b>			53.00
			319 .00 @ \$69 per hour = \$22,011



**Dave Heineman**  
Governor

## STATE OF NEBRASKA

**NEBRASKA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION**  
**Greg Lemon**

*Director*

1200 'N' Street, Suite 402

P.O. Box 94667

Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4667

Phone: (402) 471-2004

Fax: (402) 471-4492

E-Mail: [RealEstate.Commission@nebraska.gov](mailto:RealEstate.Commission@nebraska.gov)

Website: [www.nrec.ne.gov](http://www.nrec.ne.gov)

March 23, 2011

Cathy Danahy, Executive Director  
Nebraska State Records Board  
440 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 210  
Lincoln, NE 68508

RE: NSRB Grant Application



Dear Ms. Danahy,

Enclosed please find the Nebraska Real Estate Commission's application for the State Records Board grant program. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need anything further.

Sincerely,

Greg Lemon, Director  
Nebraska Real Estate Commission

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